



Individual Reading Improvement Plans (IRIPs)

Guidance for Districts



Individual Reading Improvement Plan (IRIP)

Guidance for Districts

This guidance document is advisory in nature but is binding on an agency until amended by such agency. A guidance document does not include internal procedural documents that only affect the internal operations of the agency and does not impose additional requirements or penalties on regulated parties or include confidential information or rules and regulations made in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act. If you believe that this guidance document imposes additional requirements or penalties on regulated parties, you may request a review of the document. For comments regarding this document contact nde.guidance@nebraska.gov.

Introduction

In July 2018, the legislature enacted the **Nebraska Reading Improvement Act** (Section 79-2601-79-2607) that ensures students have the necessary supports to read proficiently by grade 3. Beginning with the 2019-2020 school year, the law outlines a number of processes to identify struggling readers and provide focused interventions. While most of the exemplary practices described in the legislation are already happening in schools across the state, the law brings a renewed emphasis to the importance of early literacy and an opportunity to accelerate reading proficiency for some students.

This early literacy law requires districts and schools to set in motion procedures to identify and support students who demonstrate challenges with early reading. These include early and frequent screening, parental notification, the design of an Individualized Reading Improvement Plan (IRIP), and supplemental reading intervention services. The **Nebraska Reading Improvement Act** states:

Any student who is identified as having a reading deficiency shall receive an individual reading improvement plan no later than thirty days after the identification of such reading deficiency. The reading improvement plan may be created by the teacher, the principal, other pertinent school personnel, and the parents or guardians of the student and shall describe the reading intervention services the student will receive through the supplemental reading intervention program pursuant to section 24 of this act to remedy such reading deficiency. Each such student shall receive reading intervention services through the supplemental reading intervention program pursuant to section 24 of this act until the student is no longer identified as having a reading deficiency.

Purpose of Guidance Document

The purpose of this guidance document is to provide classroom teachers, school and district leaders, instructional coaches, and other school personnel with the necessary tools to develop IRIPs. It is not the intention of this document to provide a means of complying with the requirements of the **Nebraska Reading Improvement Act**. Rather, it is designed to describe the processes by which struggling students are identified and the targeted system of supports that will accelerate literacy development. The creation of an IRIP is a student-centered, collaborative, and data-driven process focused on specific outcomes. The creation and implementation of the plan should, above all, consider the unique strengths and needs of the individual student it is designed to support.

Individual Reading Improvement Plan (IRIP)

Guidance for Districts

The Individual Reading Improvement Plan (IRIP) is a tool designed to document a variety of information such as the student's level of reading proficiency, the evidence-based interventions that will be used to help the student improve, diagnostic data, and ideas for home support. Please consider the following:

- While the IRIP serves as the primary documentation tool to demonstrate compliance with the requirements of the law, the process of creating an IRIP should be driven by student need. The IRIP presents an opportunity to implement a thoughtful and coordinated effort to increase literacy growth. The success of the IRIP lies not in compliance nor documentation, but in the collaborative analysis of how to improve instruction for the students most in need.
- In addition to being student-centered, an IRIP has the greatest capacity for success when it is viewed as a process rather than a product. Though the IRIP serves as written documentation, it is only one step in supporting students. Identifying areas of need, providing appropriate instruction with appropriate materials and resources, providing evidence-based interventions, and monitoring progress are all critical components of the process.
- The IRIP process should be grounded in the effective use of data. The IRIP is a document that contains results of screeners and other diagnostic tools. As such, it provides an opportunity to pair evidence-based interventions to the areas of need identified by those assessments. The IRIP should reflect the ongoing use of data in the decision-making process as the student gains increasing levels of reading proficiency.
- Finally, the Nebraska Reading Improvement Act does not require the use of a particular IRIP format or template. Districts and schools are encouraged to develop templates locally according to the unique contexts and structures of the environment in which the processes will be carried out. It may be necessary to modify or adjust the IRIP template periodically in order to maximize its effectiveness. For a collection of sample IRIP templates, please visit <https://www.education.ne.gov/nebraskareads/irip-templates/>.

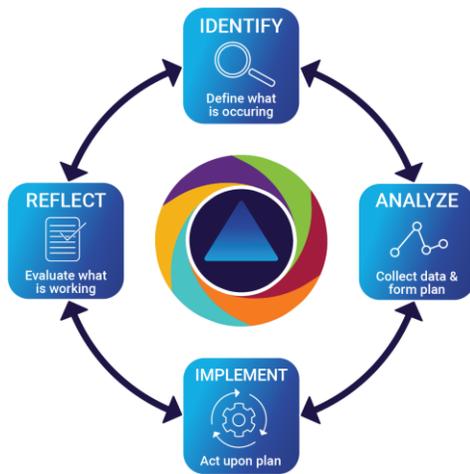
Nebraska's Multi-tiered System of Support The same processes used to identify and support struggling readers are the same processes that align with the vision of the Nebraska MTSS (NeMTSS) Framework. NeMTSS is a problem-solving process and grounded in the strengths of the continuous improvement cycle. It is therefore an effective tool to guide decision-making for students not reading proficiently. The problem-solving approach of the NeMTSS framework provides the structure to identify, develop, implement, and monitor strategies to improve individual student performance.

According to the NeMTSS Multi-Tiered System of Support Nebraska Framework Document (see <https://www.education.ne.gov/nemtss/>), there are several keys to success with using a data-based problem-solving model such as MTSS.

- ❑ A problem-solving model provides the structure to identify, develop, implement, and evaluate strategies to improve the performance of ALL students.
- ❑ The use of scientifically based or evidence-based practices must occur.
- ❑ The effectiveness of the problem-solving process is based on both fidelity of the problem-solving process itself and fidelity in the implementation of the instruction/intervention plan.
- ❑ The problem-solving process is applicable to all tiers of instruction/intervention and can be used for problem solving at the community, district, school, classroom and/or individual student levels.
- ❑ The problem-solving process is iterative. Teams may need to cycle through the problem-solving process multiple times to find successful solutions.

Adapted from Florida's, *A Multi-Tiered System of Supports Implementation Components: Ensuring Common Language and Understanding*.

Figure 1. Problem-solving and decision-making model



The development of an MTSS framework begins by establishing a strong and effective core of literacy, mathematics, and behavior for all students PreK-12. The core provides a foundation of prevention within the system. Universal screening procedures, such as those described in the Nebraska Reading Improvement Act, measure fluency and accuracy of critical early reading skills that are predictive of future skill attainment. They are used to identify students in need of support.

The district- or school-level team responsible for developing a format or template for IRIPs has flexibility in what information is included. While the law does not require its inclusion, the IRIP may consider factors related to Tier 1 instruction such as the implementation of a high-quality, standards-aligned curriculum and evidence-based instructional practices. The Nebraska MTSS Framework recognizes these as essential elements in ensuring all students are provided a strong foundation upon which they can gain proficiency with early literacy skills.

Frequently Asked Questions

The following section provides answers to commonly asked questions regarding the creation and implementation of an IRIP. For a full listing of FAQs related to the requirements of the Nebraska Reading Improvement Act, please visit <https://www.education.ne.gov/nebraskareads/frequently-asked-questions/>

What is the difference between an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and Individualized Reading Improvement Plan (IRIP)?

As Nebraska schools consider the implications of the Nebraska Reading Improvement Act, a frequently raised question has been around the identification of students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and the relationship between an IEP and an IRIP. A secondary purpose of this guide is to clarify the key differences between an IEP and an IRIP. While these two

documents are created using the same approaches and processes and contain many of the same features, there are notable differences.

The contents of an IEP are mandated federally and are part of the requirements of Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). An IEP is developed by a school team and serves the needs of a student with a disability. IEPs must state a child's current level of performance in a variety of educational areas and include eligibility for a range of special education services. The information outlines the extent to which a student participates with nondisabled students in academic and nonacademic settings as well as their participation in state, district, and local assessments. An IEP also includes a plan for transition services such as courses to achieve post-school goals. (For a closer look at the guidance related to the development and implementation of IEPs, <https://www2.ed.gov/parents/needs/speced/iepguide/index.html>).

In contrast, the scope of an IRIP is much narrower. Because IRIPs are not designed for students with disabilities, they may not contain the full profile of information as an IEP. An IRIP is focused on the interventions and supports for students who struggle with a particular aspect of reading. Like an IEP, the IRIP indicates performance levels on designated assessments, however, typically only those that measure reading proficiency. While an IEP must be reviewed annually, IRIPs are designed to be in place for shorter periods of time as the student responds to interventions and gains proficiency. And though it is recommended that a team of school personnel that may include parents is involved in the process of creating an IRIP, the team will likely be smaller than that of an IEP team. Further, an IRIP will typically be a shorter, more concise document that requires less time to create and share.

What if a student already has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP)?

There are some exemptions that apply to students who fall into certain categories. The **Nebraska Reading Improvement Act** states:

...each school district shall administer an approved reading assessment three times during the school year to all students in kindergarten through grade three, except for any student receiving specialized instruction for limited English proficiency who has been receiving such instruction for less than two years, any student receiving special education services for whom such assessment would conflict with the individualized education plan, and any student receiving services under a plan pursuant to the requirements of section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. 794, or Title II of the federal Americans with

Individual Reading Improvement Plan (IRIP)

Guidance for Districts

Disabilities Act of 1990, 42 U.S.C. 12131 to 12165, as such acts and sections existed on January 1, 2018, for whom such assessment would conflict with such section 504 or Title II plan.

When a student is exempt from participating in the required screening process, an IRIP is not required for that student; however, the school team may continue to select and use appropriate tools to assess the student's current level of proficiency and ongoing progress. Because the Nebraska Reading Improvement Act does not prohibit a district from otherwise identifying students as having a reading deficiency, school teams are encouraged to make decisions on a case-by-case basis for some students. School teams must consider a variety of factors in determining appropriate supports for individual students.

In some cases, even students on an IEP will benefit from a concurrent IRIP that specifically addresses reading skills. Unless an individual education plan includes a statement addressing reading or a significant reading impairment, it does not preclude a student from participating in the universal screening process. For example, some students are verified with a Specific Learning Disability (SLD) in the area of Mathematics and the IEP may address a specific goal such as calculation. Additional examples include students verified in the area of speech articulation, autistic spectrum disorders, emotional disturbance, or other health impairments and whose IEP goals are directly related to those verifications. The intent of the Nebraska Reading Improvement Act is to provide early intervention to *all* students in need of early literacy support, therefore, school professionals are encouraged to make determinations based on what will best serve the needs of individual students.

What should be included in an IRIP?

The **Nebraska Reading Improvement Act** requires that students who are identified as reading below the threshold level of an approved assessment receive an IRIP within thirty days of the identification. Some specific criteria for the establishment of an IRIP are designated in the law. For example, IRIPs must describe the reading intervention services the student will receive. Other components will serve to provide a clearer picture of an individual student's strengths and needs. The following components are *recommended* to ensure the plan is developed and implemented with student success in mind:

Individual Reading Improvement Plan (IRIP)

Guidance for Districts

- General information about the student and the school environment
- The student's level of performance per the threshold level requirements established by the assessment (*Note: Universal screeners administered three times annually are to be selected from the approved list published by the Nebraska Department of Education March 1st, 2019 and each year thereafter. For more information, <https://www.education.ne.gov/nebraskareads/>*)
- Specific information gleaned from diagnostic tools that identify areas of strength and challenge with early reading skills
- Observational data gathered by the classroom teacher
- The research-based supplemental interventions that are matched to the student's identified area(s) of need
- Instructional goals and benchmarks for growth
- Date(s) of parental notification and ongoing contact which may also include a parent signature that a notification letter and home support plan were received
- A plan that provides suggestions for home supports and includes related materials, tools, and resources

The sections to follow are organized around the recommended components of an IRIP. Together, these components outline a thoughtful and intentional approach to helping individual schools or districts develop both an IRIP template and a process for aligning evidence-based practices with student needs.

General Student Information

The first section of an IRIP should contain basic student information such as:

- the student's name,
- grade level,
- date of birth,

- identification number, and classroom teacher(s) or other staff who work closely with the student.

Schools may streamline this process by utilizing their student information system (SIS) or data management system to populate the document with the desired basic information.

Student Strengths and Needs

It is important to consider a student's strengths, both with literacy and other areas, particularly strengths that are likely to contribute to his or her success. Students come to the educational setting with a variety of positive attributes such as social and behavioral traits, good habits, academic skills, motivation, or high performance in other subject areas or extracurricular activities. The IRIP provides an opportunity to identify those strengths and then work toward collaboratively leveraging them to achieve the goals of the plan.

In contrast, the student may have needs or challenges that should be considered throughout the process of implementing supports. Examples include vision or hearing loss, other health issues, poor attendance, or certain environmental factors that may impact a student's ability to learn. Parents or guardians are a valuable source of information and can provide a broader perspective on the unique set of assets and challenges a student brings to his or her learning experience.

Vision impairment. According to the Nebraska Foundation for Children's Vision, 20% of Kindergarten students have vision problems, and research indicates that 60% of individuals enrolled in literacy programs have vision problems. In addition, the Nebraska Optometric Association estimates that as many as 1 in 5 school-aged children have an undiagnosed binocular vision problem that affects classroom learning. While many parents feel that basic vision screenings offered in the school environment are sufficient to indicate a problem, they do not evaluate skills such as focusing, alignment of the eyes, depth perception, color vision, peripheral side vision, or overall eye health. In addition, basic eye exams do not consistently identify underlying vision impairments. Teachers should recognize some general signs and symptoms of a vision impairment such as squinting, covering or closing one eye, poor reading comprehension, lack of reading stamina, or holding print materials close.

Individual Reading Improvement Plan (IRIP)

Guidance for Districts

For students identified with a reading deficit, schools should not rule out the potential of a vision impairment and consider a comprehensive eye examination as part of the problem-solving process. The American Academy of Pediatrics, American Optometric Association, American Public Health Association, and Prevent Blindness America recommend an eye examination by a licensed eye care specialist prior to entering school. A comprehensive eye examination can diagnose specific vision problems and assure children receive appropriate corrective treatment that will allow for classroom success.

For more information, please visit <https://nebraska.aoa.org/consumers/public-service-programs-for-vision-care/nebraska-foundation-for-childrens-vision> or <https://nebraska.aoa.org/>.

Mobile students. Student mobility refers to the frequency with which a student changes schools and/or districts that is unrelated to grade promotion. For many students, this means frequent transfers within a school year. Research http://www.greatlakescenter.org/docs/Policy_Briefs/Rumberger-Student-Mobility.pdf has shown that mobility negatively affects student learning and achievement, particularly for students in the early grades who are developing foundational literacy skills. For some districts, especially in large, urban areas, high mobility is a barrier to meeting the needs of vulnerable students. Certain requirements of the Nebraska Reading Improvement Act such as screening, parental notification, and provision of reading intervention will present special challenges related to implementation.

Schools must develop procedures for supporting mobile and highly mobile students. This may include determining an appropriate assessment timeline for individual students. Because the law requires 3x annual screening, schools should make every effort to screen an incoming student as soon as possible upon enrollment and select from the sequence the administration that corresponds with the established schedule. For example, a student entering from outside of the district in mid-September would be assessed using the beginning-of-year (BOY) assessment. It is also recommended that districts develop processes for the transfer of records such as an IRIP for those students who move within-district.

Student Assessment Information

Universal Screening Results. Early reading assessments help educators determine a students' mastery of emerging skills such as phonemic awareness, phonics,

vocabulary and word analysis skills, reading fluency, and comprehension strategies. Per the requirements of the Nebraska Reading Improvement Act, a universal screener is administered to all students in grades K-3 within the first 30 days of the school year, and three times total during the academic year. Schools may select a universal screener from the approved list at <https://www.education.ne.gov/nebraskareads/>. The selected screener assesses the major areas of early literacy and provides information about potential areas of concern.

This section of the IRIP presents an opportunity to both share the results of the screener as well as to define the essential components of early reading. These components are the cornerstone of reading proficiently by grade 3. Schools may wish to include a brief list of definitions in this section so that parents and other caregivers have a clearer understanding of their child's performance. For example:

- **Phonemic awareness**: the knowledge that written and spoken words are made up of *phonemes*, or smaller parts; phonemic awareness provides a foundation for being able to read and spell
- **Phonics**: also known as the *alphabetic principle*, an understanding of the relationship between written letters and the sounds they are associated with in the spoken language
- **Vocabulary and word analysis**: how to recognize and understand a wide range of words; explicit and systematic vocabulary instruction through all grades is critically important to reading proficiently
- **Reading fluency**: the ability to read quickly and with ease; fluency also includes the ability to interpret emotions in the text and use the voice accordingly to represent them, or to use the voice to emphasize words.
- **Text comprehension**: the ability to understand the purpose and meaning of a text

For more information about the "Literacy Big 5," please visit <https://www.nichd.nih.gov/sites/default/files/publications/pubs/nrp/Documents/report.pdf>.

Schools may also wish to provide contextual information about the screener, for example, a chart that outlines the threshold levels of performance relative to how the individual student performed. It is important to include the information in accessible language so that parents and caregivers have a better understanding of the difficulty, why certain interventions were selected, and

how they can support the student in the home environment. Schools may also opt to attach reports directly to the IRIP.

Diagnostic Screening Results. The NeMTSS Framework recognizes diagnostic measures as the “formal and informal tools used to assess specific academic skills or examine functions of behavior” (p. 17). Schools are advised to continue using diagnostic measures, especially for those students whose screening results indicate a potential area of concern. The diagnostic measures provide educators a more detailed look at where an individual student might be struggling and are more directly aligned to a specific skill than a universal screener. These results should also guide decision-making regarding the identification and use of evidence-based interventions.

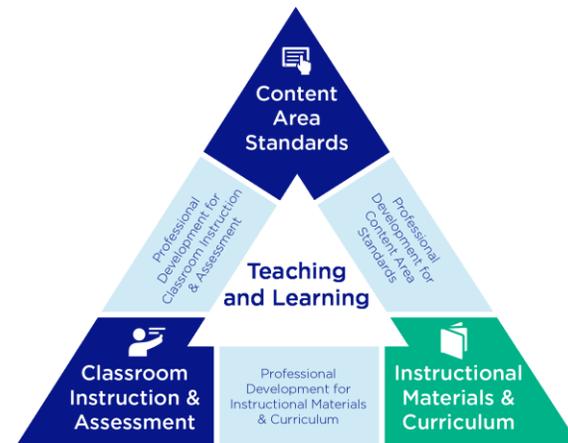
While universal screeners must be selected from NDE’s approved list, schools may still use diagnostic assessments, which do not require departmental approval. It may be advisable to attach reports from diagnostic tools to the IRIP along with screening results.

Supplemental Reading Intervention

Within a strong MTSS framework, all instruction, intervention, and assessment practices are evidence-based. To be considered evidence-based, a practice must have multiple demonstrations of effectiveness for the population intended from high-quality experimental studies. A supplemental reading intervention program is an intensive and evidence-based program of instructional strategies designed to support students in developing the critical skills associated with reading. Quality supplemental reading intervention programs are characterized by skillful instruction, the use of focused strategies informed by data and tailored to the specific needs of students, small-group and/or individualized instruction, and the use of ongoing formative assessment.

Although a thorough explanation of how to determine if a practice is evidence based is beyond the scope of this document, additional resources are available. For resources related to Evidence-

Figure 2. In Nebraska, effective teaching and learning requires five key components.



Once a student has been identified as having a challenge in one or more domains of early literacy, that student should receive a supplemental program of intervention. According to the Nebraska Reading Improvement Act, the program should be provided to any student identified as having a reading deficiency and be implemented during regular school hours in addition to regularly scheduled reading instruction. The Nebraska Reading Improvement Act outlines other criteria for the program of intervention and may also include:

- (a) *Reading intervention techniques that are based on scientific research and best practices;*
- (b) *Diagnostic assessments to frequently monitor student progress throughout the school year and adjust instruction accordingly;*
- (c) *Intensive intervention using strategies selected from the following list to match the weaknesses identified in the diagnostic assessment:*
 - (i) *Development in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension;*
 - (ii) *Explicit and systematic instruction with detailed explanations, extensive opportunities for guided practice, and opportunities for error corrections and feedback; or*
 - (iii) *Daily targeted individual or small-group reading intervention based on student needs as determined by diagnostic assessment data subject to planned extracurricular school activities*

Using screening and diagnostic measures as a guide, interventions should be matched according to identified student needs. In some cases, students may

need a comprehensive program that addresses all 5 areas of early literacy: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension strategies. Other students may need less intensive support within one or two of these domains, and that is of shorter duration. While many core programs offer interventions designed to target specific skills, it is still recommended that schools have at their disposal other interventions or programs beyond the core curriculum. In this way, schools will be better equipped to meet the full range of student skill deficits.

Before selecting any intervention, educators should consider a number of factors:

- Does the intervention have a strong evidence base for its effectiveness?
- To what extent can the intervention be implemented with fidelity?
- Does the intervention significantly increase the intensity of instruction?
- Are there opportunities for small-group and/or individualized instruction?
- Does the intervention provide the opportunity for explicit, direct instruction?
- How often does the intervention provide opportunities for the student to practice new skills?
- Does the duration of the intervention rely on the use of progress monitoring?

This section of the IRIP provides a general overview of what intervention(s) or program(s) of intervention will be used to remediate the identified area of need. The following are suggested sub-sections:

1. Information about the core reading program, including core instructional materials. The core program is a key component of tiered instruction and available to all students, not just those in need of intervention. All Nebraska students should have access to an evidence-based, scientifically researched core program that is implemented with fidelity.
2. What area(s) of need to be addressed by the intervention(s)
3. Name of intervention program with brief description
4. Types of intervention (i.e. daily, small-group, individual, or other)
5. Who will provide the intervention
6. Frequency and duration of intervention

Resources for educators. In collaboration with the Nebraska MTSS team, the Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families, and Schools at the University of

Nebraska-Lincoln has created a resource that allows districts to compare educational programs, including programs of reading intervention. <http://nemtss.unl.edu/resources/program-comparison-chart/>. It is intended to help educators make informed decisions regarding programs that may be implemented in their schools. The programs included are neither “approved” nor “required.” This document will be updated periodically as districts request information about available products. To have a program reviewed, <http://nemtss.unl.edu/resources/program-request/>.

Progress Monitoring

Progress monitoring refers to the process used to assess a student's academic performance, to assess a student rate of responsiveness to instruction, and to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction. In this section, which may be combined with the intervention information in the previous section, the team will provide a brief description of how progress will be monitored, what tool(s) will be used, and what progress is being made toward the identified area(s) of difficulty. Progress monitoring data may be *qualitative*, (i.e. teacher observational data) or *quantitative* (i.e. measurable, numeric information) or a combination of both. For example, a simple line graph can be used to chart a student's progress with oral reading fluency over time. Some curricular materials may have digital tools for monitoring and reporting which may include consumable reporting options.

Parental Notification

Schools are required to notify parents or guardians of a difficulty with early literacy skills. The **Nebraska Reading Improvement Act states:**

The school of any student who is identified as having a reading deficiency shall notify such student's parents or guardians either in writing or by electronic communication no later than fifteen working days after the identification of the reading deficiency that the student has been identified as having a reading deficiency and that an individual reading improvement plan will be established and shared with the parents or guardians.

This section of the IRIP details when parental notification was made, to whom in the household, and how it was communicated (i.e. mailed letter, email communication). Although the Nebraska Reading Improvement Act only requires that parents be notified of a reading struggle, engaging families

meaningfully and early about literacy contributes to great student success later on. This section presents an opportunity to document ongoing engagement with families. Some districts may choose to provide space for an ongoing contact log.

The Nebraska Department of Education has provided a sample parent notification letter, available in English and Spanish. *Please note that this sample notification letter is not the required piece of communication, and districts are welcome to create their own written or electronic communications.* Districts and schools may use the sample in full-text form or adapt the text as needed. For example, some districts may opt to inform *all* parents of screening results, not just those whose students have performed below the established threshold level.

<https://www.education.ne.gov/ela/communication-resources/>
https://nebraskalegislature.gov/laws/display_html.php?begin_section=79-2601&end_section=79-2607

Home Supports for Early Literacy Development

Schools are required to provide students a supplemental reading intervention program. According to the **Nebraska Reading Improvement Act**, this program may also include:

...strategies and resources to assist with reading skills at home, including parent-training workshops and suggestions for parent-guided home reading...

Engaging families early and meaningfully as partners in their child's literacy development is a key to success. This section of the IRIP describes practices, strategies, and other types of supports that can be enacted in a student's home environment.

The Nebraska Department of Education recognizes family engagement as a critical area of focus in its Accountability for a Quality Education System, Today and Tomorrow (AQuESTT) <https://aquestt.com/> system within the tenet of Student Success and Access. Because Nebraska districts also demonstrate a strong commitment to engaging families and communities, schools may continue providing the outreach, tools, and resources they have developed locally. The requirements of the Nebraska Reading Improvement Act also present an opportunity to find new ways to involve families and caregivers as critical partners in developing early literacy.

The National Center on Improving Literacy

(<https://improvingliteracy.org/brief/supporting-your-childs-literacy-development-home>) recommends a number of fun and engaging ways to make learning to read fun. The following is a short list of suggestions that may be included in this section of the IRIP. Specific suggestions should consider the unique needs of students, the home and family environment, and the willingness or availability of caregivers to carry out the recommendations.

- Read nursery rhymes to develop rhyming skills.
- Play audio books or read aloud to children daily.
- Keep a variety of print materials within reach of children, especially in play areas.
- Label everyday objects in the home.
- Let children choose books based on their interests; visit the library often.
- Play word games.
- Ask questions before, during, and after reading aloud.
- Sing, draw, and tell stories.
- Model good reading and writing habits.

Schools should also provide opportunities for students to participate in extensions of classroom work. Students who struggle with early reading skills benefit from some of the same activities, games, and puzzles they encounter in the classroom and they provide additional practice to reinforce new skills. Extensions of classroom work may also include the use of technology. For example, many educational apps and games used during the school day can also be accessed from devices at home. When making recommendations about particular apps or other electronic resources, it is important to evaluate their usefulness, quality, and content so that students have access to appropriate tools for learning. Many high-quality curricular materials also provide teachers with send-home, consumable resources that complement classroom learning.

English language learners. Under the **Nebraska Reading Improvement Act**, schools are required to communicate the student's reading difficulty and share the individual reading improvement plan with parents or guardians. Whenever possible, resources and communications should be provided in the home language. In addition, the use of translation services is recommended

Individual Reading Improvement Plan (IRIP)

Guidance for Districts

throughout the process of informing parents, developing an IRIP, and providing updates on progress.

Because all parents can be engaged in the work of developing literacy in young children, schools should find ways to encourage families, including those who are not English speakers, to partner in this important effort. Developing skills in the first language enhances second-language learning. For example, first-language activities such as read-alouds, oral storytelling, rhymes, songs, and chants, all help young readers develop literacy in *both* languages. For more information, The Global Family Research Project has identified seven research-based practices of families who effectively promote early literacy:

<https://globalfrp.org/Articles/Seven-Research-Based-Ways-Families-Promote-Early-Literacy>.

Contributors

Jadie Beam, ESU 13

Abby Burke, Nebraska Department of Education

John Chvatal, Omaha Public Schools

Susan Evans, ESU 10

Patrice Feller, ESU 10

Janet Foss, ESU 3

Sharon Heater, Nebraska Department of Education

Melody Hobson, Nebraska Department of Education

Rhea Hochstein, Nebraska Department of Education

Luann Jacobs, Omaha Public Schools

April Kelley, ESU 6

Brooke Koliha, ESU 7

Dallas Lewandowski, ESU 10

Kristine Luebbe, Nebraska Department of Education

Stephabnie Lundgren, ESU 8

Jen Madison, ESU 4

Amy Mundil, ESU 1

Lisa Oltman, Lincoln Public Schools

Amy Rhone, Nebraska Department of Education

Cheryl Roche, ESU 16

Joni Runge, ESU 5

Amy Schultz, ESU 9

Terri Schuster, Nebraska Department of Education

Kim Snyder, Nebraska Department of Education

Shirley Vargas, Nebraska Department of Education

Kellie Wojcik, Nebraska Department of Education

Caryn Zietflow, ESU 2